STAFF SENATE MEETING
MINUTES
June 13, 2011

Note to Senators: Please share the senate agenda, minutes, and any other enclosures with your colleagues prior to the scheduled meeting. Senate meetings are open to all staff. Agendas, minutes, and attendance rosters are available on the Staff Senate website at http://www.etsu.edu/stsenate/default.asp

PRESENT: James Batchelder, Carolyn Bond, Lisa Booher, Loretta Bradley, Queen Brown, Christy Buckles, Cindy Canter, Kathy Carver, David Collins, Phyllis Cooper, Tim Dills, Ann Eargle, Charles Forrester, Linda Greenwell, Thomas Hill, Ned Irwin, Myra Jones, Janet Keener, Paul Lavoie, Leigh Lewis, Susan Lilly, Candy Massey, Mary Maupin, Diana McClay, Donna Miller, Joe Miller, Crystal Nelson, Margaret Pate, Betty Ann Proffitt, David Robinson, Rob Russell, Sue Russell, Jamie Simmons, Kathy Smith, Debbie Starnes, and Karen Sullivan.


I. Call to Order

In the absence of President Patton, President-Elect Batchelder called the meeting to order at 2:35 pm.

II. Guest Speaker – Dr. David Collins, Vice President, Finance & Administration

Dr. David Collins was invited to speak to the senate to offer an update of the current state of the budget. Dr. Collins noted that legislators have passed and recommended a budget which was very close to the recommendations of the governor. Dr. Collins shared that higher education will endure an additional 2% further reduction in appropriations for this budget year instead of a 1% reduction which administration had been anticipating. Dr. Collins further shared that a 1.6%, across the board, salary increase was approved, but was only funded at 55%. Funding for the remaining 45% will be realized through an increase in student fees. He noted that it appears that TBR may approve an additional 1.4% salary increase for a total of 3% across the board. This additional amount would also be funded from an increase in student fees. He also indicated that there may be an opportunity for a bonus of up to $1,000. He emphasized that only the 1.6% is official at this time. Both the additional 1.4% and bonus are subject to approval by TBR at their June 24th meeting. In addition, Dr. Collins noted that there was a new law passed indicating that anyone working with students will be required to undergo background checks.

Dr. Collins opened the floor to questions from senators. He confirmed that, to date, there have been no employees terminated or laid off due to budget cuts and there are no plans to do so. The chancellor has discussed the possibility of utilizing a search firm for the presidential search and hopefully further details will be laid out at the June Board Meeting regarding the search process. There are no changes to the pay out of longevity bonuses. The “guns on campus” legislation went to summer study and did not pass this year, but there is always the possibility of a resurfacing next year. The pay out of accrued compensatory time was necessitated out of a budget issue. Employees are still allowed to bank compensatory time in lieu of being paid, but time can only be accrued for one year. According to the revised policy, payment of compensatory time earned during any one year, if not otherwise used in accordance with established policy, will be paid at the employee’s current rate of pay on the last payroll in May. Holiday time accrued during a given year when an employee may have been required to work on an official holiday, and not otherwise used during the year in accordance with established policy, would be paid in like manner on the last payroll in May. Dr. Collins explained that accumulation of such time over a longer extended period becomes a budgetary issue particularly when that accumulated time would have to be paid at a higher dollar amount. In surveying other schools, some have opted to disallow banking of compensatory time and pay for the time worked, but administration felt it to be too drastic a change in that some employees utilize their compensatory time for emergency situations, i.e., time off for surgery, sick children, etc. He reiterated that the policy change was more of a budget issue than anything else.
III. Approval of Minutes – The minutes of May 9, 2011 were approved as distributed and will be posted on the Staff Senate website.

IV. President’s Report – President-Elect James Batchelder

A. Discussion and Vote on Stance of Handgun Policies – President-Elect Batchelder noted that the handgun bills were provided as attachments with this month’s notice of the meeting as an opportunity for review prior to discussion and vote on the senate’s stance. After discussion, and in light of Dr. Collins’ brief on the handgun bills going to summer study, it was suggested that an up or down vote on the senate’s stance may be in vain. There is also a strong possibility that next year’s bill(s) may not be identical legislation to that which was proposed this year necessitating a repeat vote next year. It was evident that the senate members had mixed views on the matter regarding for/against the handgun bills. A vote for/against would only pertain to the main campus and not applicable to the VA campus due to that institution being a federal facility thereby not allowing, under any circumstance, firearms on the premises. A motion was made to table the discussion until the legislators are back in session. The motion was seconded, and approved.

B. Out-of-Cycle Nomination for Chair, Wellness Committee – President-Elect Batchelder reported that this item will be tabled until the next meeting.

C. Staff Senate Meetings for Fall/Spring 2011-2012 – President-Elect Batchelder shared that the Staff Senate Executive Committee had discussed the possibility of changing the meeting day from the second Monday. However, since then, the Faculty Senate has decided to begin conducting three meetings a month to be held on the first, third, and fourth Mondays. Since both senates prefer to meet in the Forum Room and Faculty Senate has increased their number of meeting days, it would not be in our best interest to make a change at this time.

D. Renaming of the “Holiday” Committee – President-Elect Batchelder noted that some thought has been given to renaming the Holiday Committee. Historically, the Holiday Committee has been responsible for coordination, promotion, and distribution of goods for the annual drive with a mission to assist disadvantaged ETSU employees, students, and outlying communities. However, with the recent experience of misfortune for some faculty, staff, and students, (i.e., untimely fires, inclement weather events, etc.), it has been suggested that perhaps the Holiday Committee could be expanded to be more inclusive of additional benevolent needs thereby requiring a change in name. Some suggestions were Special Events Committee, Special Occasion Committee, and Holiday and Special Needs Committee. Senator Simmons motioned that proposed new names for the Holiday Committee be forwarded to President Patton for a final vote to be conducted at the next meeting. The motion was seconded, and approved.

V. Treasurer Report – Senator Booher shared that after the picnic expenses have been paid, and the costs of office supplies for the cookbook have been satisfied, the budget balance will be $600.65. In addition, Senator Booher noted that she received a benevolence check in the amount of $150.00 from a gentleman living in northern California whose oldest granddaughter will be a sophomore at ETSU. The gentleman noted that he hoped the donation may help some of the storm victims.

VI. Report on Standing Committees

A. Committee on Committees – Senator Warner, no report.

B. Communications and Website – Senator Jones, no report.

C. Liaison Committee – President-Elect Batchelder, no report.
D. **Staff Concerns** – Senator Keener reported that she has been working collaboratively with Senator Greenwell, Chair, Committee on Elections, to review attendance records in an effort to identify senators who may be in violation of senate attendance guidelines. Senator Keener also reported that she has received permission to incorporate the proposed changes in the Constitution as an added component to the July election process in lieu of forwarding two separate emails.

E. **Staff Development and Evaluation** – Senator Renfro, no report.

F. **Committee on Elections** – Senator Greenwell reported that a request for senate nominations will be forwarded to staff members shortly. At this time, it appears that there will be 11 vacancies on the senate.

G. **Visibility Committee** – Senator Hill reported that the committee continues its work on the cookbook which will serve as a fund raiser for the senate. The committee will meet again on the 23rd of June to discuss cookbook details. It is planned to request that the recipes be forwarded via email to Senator Simmons. An additional proposal to generate revenue for Staff Senate is to sell t-shirts. Dr. Collins asked that we be conscious of the current contract between the university and the bookstore. Currently, the bookstore is selling t-shirts very similar to a t-shirt we propose selling and attempting to sell our shirts or other items may be an infringement on the bookstore’s contract with the university. Dr. Collins noted that if we intend to sell any item, we would have to work with the bookstore to discuss details because, by contract, the bookstore has exclusive rights to sell on campus. In terms of a cookbook, since it is a fund raiser, the bookstore may not take issue. However, sales tax issues come into play and any item sold is subject to sales tax. The cookbook initiative is still in the early stages and details are currently being worked out. As discussed in a prior meeting, Senator Hill shared that President Patton, Senator Eargle, and he presented a PowerPoint regarding promoting Staff Senate as a whole. Senator Hill inquired of the senate as to whether or not they feel that this initiative is something that should be continued. There seemed to be agreement among senators for setting up a specific time frame for visits to different building locations. It was also suggested to offer a brochure of information in lieu of a PowerPoint presentation. President-Elect Batchelder proposed identifying a specific week for “Visibility Week” assigning different senators to the various building locations. A suggestion was offered to conduct the visits during the senate voting period which would perhaps encourage staff members to vote. Details will need to be discussed and determined to assure the success of the initiative. Senator Nelson volunteered to create a brochure to distribute during the Visibility Week. In addition, it is hoped that the two athletics resolutions can be presented in the near future.

VII. **Report on Project Committees**

A. **Staff Awards Committee** – Senator Sullivan, no report.

B. **Blood Drive** – Senator Booher, Chair, reported that the Blood Drive was held June 6, 2011, 11:00am-5:00pm, in Ballroom Left of the D. P. Culp Center. There were 20 who presented to donate; 16 were able to donate and of the 16, two were first-time donors. Senator Booher shared that the numbers were decreased compared to prior blood drives and the goal was not met. She shared that summer is typically not the best time for blood drives due to decreased numbers on campus.

C. **Holiday Drive** – Senator Bond, no report.

D. **Staff Picnic** – Senator Cooper noted that she was very appreciative to everyone for their prayers, thoughts, and cards while she was on medical leave.
In addition, she thanked the Senators who stepped up and were willing and able to complete the coordination and implementation of the Staff Picnic in her absence. President-Elect Batchelder spoke on behalf of President Patton and echoed Senator Cooper’s appreciation to the Senators for a job very well done. The picnic was believed to be a wonderful success. The location of the picnic, the access lines to the food, the type and delivery of music, the recycling bins, and the manner in which the prizes were awarded was very well thought out and coordinated. Senator Hill shared that the golf-cart pick-up and delivery service was a wonderful added benefit for staff members who would otherwise not have been able to attend the picnic due to transportation, etc. Senator Buckles noted that she has received a great deal of feedback from staff members and is compiling the ideas and suggestions in a notebook for the next chair of the committee. The ideas and suggestions may be used for future enhancement of the event. She requested Senators to forward any suggestions they’ve received to her attention for inclusion in the notebook. The canned goods initiative, which was designed to help the storm victims, did not fare well. Some donations were realized, but the email request was untimely for some to appreciate the opportunity to donate. A suggestion was made to visit this initiative again in the future in hopes of perhaps donating the goods to a local food bank.

VIII. Old Business

A. There was no old business to discuss.

IX. New Business

A. **Alternative Location for the July Staff Senate Meeting** – President-Elect Batchelder shared that there was a suggestion to hold the July Staff Senate meeting at an alternate location. Two of the options were ETSU at Valleybrook and the ETSU Innovation Laboratory. Some Senators were concerned that the distance to the Valleybrook location would be an issue. Via an informal vote, Senators were in agreement to hold the next Staff Senate meeting at the ETSU Innovation Laboratory. A map and directions will be included with the next meeting reminder.

X. Open Floor for New Agenda Items/Concerns – None.

XI. Announcements – None.

**Adjournment** – There being no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 3:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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J. Ann Eargle
Secretary